

Thomas P. Ives Block
270-276 Benefit Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-158

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
60-

PHOTOGRAPH
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THOMAS P. IVES BLOCK

Address: 270-276 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence
County, Rhode Island.

Plat 12, lots 134-140.

Present Owner: Hannibal Hamlin and wife Margaret, 270 Benefit
Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Present Occupant: Owner and tenants

Present Use: Apartment house

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is a block of four, brick row houses, built
between 1814-19, a rather unusual type of building
for Providence at this time.

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and Subsequent Owners:

1795 John Burroughs Hopkins, trustee for Mary Young
(widow Archibald Young who owned in 1759) to T. P. Ives
\$1330 a certain lot of land with D H, bd. 50' Benefit and
170 back N by grantor, W by Esek Hopkins, S. by Joseph
Crawford. - Deed Book 24, page 141 in Providence City
Hall.

1798 Providence Tax List - Thomas Ives, One lot E on
Benefit 120' front, back 50', then narrows to 108 that
width 60' further back, then narrows to 40' and 50'
further back--W on own land, S by Jonathan Rogers on
which is a barn 20' x 30', two stories wood and a chaise
house 34 x 112 one story wood.

1814 Mss. tax descriptions in Rhode Island Historical
Society, Providence, for the 1814 Providence direct tax
to the federal government - T. P. Ives, a lot of land
situated on the West side of Benefit Street, bounded E
Benefit 120', N Thomas Dring (this is now the Stephen
Hopkins lot) W by Providence Bank, S by ?(not given).

1819 Indenture between Thomas P. Ives of the first
part and Elizabeth Rogers between et al by their father
Samuel Nightingale of the 2nd part where as the parties
of the first part are owners of two adjoining lots set
on W/ly side of Benefit Street for the purpose of estab-
lishing the dividing line between them at right angles
to said street--Party of the 1st part quit claims to
party of 2nd part a small triangle set at the S ly end

of the BLOCK OF BRICK BUILDINGS ERECTED BY THE PARTY OF
THE FIRST PART on the W ly side of Benefit Street. - Deed
Book 42, page 504 in Providence City Hall.

- 1821 Elizabeth Rogers et al sell for \$1,000 to T. P.
Ives a certain lot of land bounded E on Benefit, W by
grantors S by John Larchar, N by T. P. Ives (mortgage?).
Deed Book 45, page 102 in Providence City Hall.
- 1846 Hope Ives, widow, Moses B, Robert H and Charlotte
R Goddard...\$6000 on house on W side of Benefit Street...
Brick..3 stories high in front and 4 in rear...107'x35'...
being block of 4 tenements..occupied for a DWELLING HOUSE
...Mss. fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual
Insurance Company at the Rhode Island Historical Society,
Providence, R. I. Vol. 33, policy #134585.
- 1854 Thomas P. Ives Heirs
- 1864 Anne A. Ives
Hope B. Russell W to Charlotte R. Goddard. - Wills
Book 28, page 260, in Providence City Hall.
- 1882 Indenture #2 allotment u/w of Charlotte R. Goddard
to T. P. I. Goddard "a certain lot of land with bldgs.
and improvements in the Old Benefit St. Block, so-called
being lot #19 on a certain plat of heirs of Thos. P.
Ives by Wm. Haines in 1867, being Book of Plats #7, Page 9,
being part of premises conveyed to Charlotte R. Goddard
by deed of partition by and between said Charlotte R.
Goddard of the first part and Robert H. Ives of the 2nd
part and Anne A. Ives, Henry G. Russell and Hope B.
Russell wife of said Henry of the 3rd part in 1867."
Deed Book 307, page 305; Wills Book 28, pages 260-292
in Providence City Hall.
- 1882 William Gammell, Jr., trustee, to T.P.I. Goddard
(being one of the houses in the Old or Benefit St. Block,
so-called, being lot #19) (same as Deed Book 307, page
305 as above). - Providence Directory 318, page 236.
- 1884 Hope B. Russell
1910 Hope B. Russell, Est.
1911 John L. Kehoe
1913 Patrick H. Keefe
1929 Isaac Rose
1940 Isaac Rose, Est.
1946 Charles F. McGunigle & wife Ada
1948 Hannibal Hamlin & wife Marg.

B. Date of Erection: Between 1814-19

- C. Notes on alterations and additions: The north half of the building, two of the original four houses, was remodeled following a fire in 1946. Originally, the building had two rear wings, each shared by two of the houses. The north wing, which burned in the fire, was not rebuilt. In the subsequent repairing, an archway was cut through the first floor of the second house from the north to give access to a parking area in the rear. This archway, which slopes down toward the rear, eliminated all of the first floor of that house except the entrance-stair hall and a small room at the rear. The basement of the northernmost house has been rebuilt as a doctor's office with a separate entrance on Benefit Street.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
August 1961

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural interest: This is a block of four, brick row houses, three stories high, built 1814-19, an unusual type of dwelling for Providence at this time, but with characteristic exterior and interior details.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: About 108' long, divided by brick party walls into four houses, about 32' deep, with a frame wing at the rear of the southernmost two apartments. On a sloping lot, three stories high at the front and four stories high at the rear.
2. Foundations: Regular ashlar granite in front; field-stone in rear.
3. Wall construction: Brick laid in common bond. Part of the first floor of the second house from the north has been cut out, a wide archway set in place, and a driveway cut through, sloping down to a parking area in the rear.
4. Stoops: The entrances are paired, and two stoops serve the four entrances. Stoops are of large blocks of cut granite matching the foundation in front, and have simple iron railings.
5. Chimneys: Six brick chimneys: two in each end wall serving the end houses, and two in the center serving the two inside houses.

6. Openings:

- a. Doors and doorways: Six-panel entrance doors with semicircular fanlights set in arched brick openings. Openings framed with simple pilastered doorways with pediments added later. A later door, leading to a basement office, is between the original north pair of doors, and cuts through their common stoop.
- b. Windows and shutters: Double-hung wood windows, six-light sash on first and second floors, and smaller eight-light sash on the third floor. Window openings have stone sills and lintels. Windows have louvered shutters. Some rear windows have been replaced; two front windows removed for the driveway.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hip roofs on the two end units, gable roofs on the two center units, covered with asphalt shingles. Brick parapet walls between the houses.
- b. Cornice and eaves: Corbeled, denticulated brick cornice with wood fascia and metal eave trough above.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Similar plans in the four apartments in the block: (two houses in north half examined, other two are assumed to be similar). Two rooms on each floor with entrance-stair hall the full depth of the house at one side. Some hallways have been partitioned off to provide bathrooms, kitchens, etc., for later apartment use.
2. Stairways: Both front and rear stairs in hall. Original front stairs: straight run, open string, no trim on step ends; curved and ramped railing, plain, shaped rail curving around and forming cap of newel post, newels in form of plain Doric columns, slender rectangular balusters.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
4. Flooring: Original flooring in some areas; pine boards about 10" wide. Oak flooring, about 8" wide in first floor of north house, not original.
5. Doors and doorways: Recessed panel doors with four or six panels, some with quarter round moldings, others

with typical Greek Revival ogee molding. Mitered, molded doorways. Original double doors between first floor rooms removed.

6. Trim: Mitered and molded window frames with deep reveals; aprons on first floor windows; folding, divided six-panel shutters on second floor; divided shutters on first floor are correct for the period but from a demolished house on George Street. Window sills continue as chair rail which projects about 2" to form a small ledge; similar chair rail in hallway; heavy chair rail on second floor may be later. Molded, coved cornices on first and second floor, deeper on first floor; molded cornice about 4" deep in hallway, small molded cornices on third floor.
7. Hardware: Small gilt or brass plated door knobs. Butt hinges.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Modern central heating plus original fireplaces in each room. West room in the cellar of the north house, now remodeled as doctor's office but probably the original kitchen, plain one-story wood mantel with engaged Doric columns supporting a plain entablature probably added later from another house. First floor of north house has plain, one-story, black marble, Greek Revival mantelpieces, slate hearths. Second and third floors have plain, one-story, wood mantelpieces with molded fireplace surrounds, plain board frieze, mantel shelf about 6" deep supported by flattened, quirked moldings, white marble hearths of tiles about 12" square.

D. Site

1. Orientation and general setting: The row of houses faces east, on the sidewalk, without side yards and with the back yard used for parking.
2. Walks and driveways: Walks are brick or asphalt; the driveway cut through the house is asphalt and the rear parking area is paved with Belgian blocks.
3. Landscaping: Rear parking area is bordered with trees and bushes.

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